

# AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S SPEECH STYLE: USING CONVERSATIONS ON THE COMPUTER NETWORK

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## Introduction

Speech is an act of identity. One gets information about another speaker not so much from *what he/she says* as from *how he/she says it*. It has been established by many linguists that men and women pursue different interactive styles: men typically employ a competitive and assertive style in conversation, while women adopt a co-operative and supportive style, using linguistic strategies motivated by the notion of politeness more frequently than do men. What this phenomenon reflects is the plain fact that men and women belong to different subcultures. More concretely, sex differences in language usage can partly be interpreted in terms of men's superior, and women's inferior, positions in society,<sup>1</sup> and, in turn, in terms of the pressures and constraints this kind of social structure exerts on their (especially women's) behaviour. Women are expected to follow certain *norms* of interactional styles based on this sexist concept (for example, "Don't assert yourselves." or "Speak politely."). To put the matter simply, it is the sense of what is "appropriate" for them as speakers in each subculture that differentiates women from men in their linguistic behaviour.

This argument, however, has been proposed by linguists through analyses of face-to-face conversations, such as occur naturally in every-day life. We are now concerned with whether, and to what degree, the linguistic features that women are said to use by preference can also be explained along the lines of "genderlects" in artificial verbal interchanges with complete strangers on the computer network, since

underlying the concept of “women’s style” is a presumed consideration for the feelings of the hearer or addressee (H)—that is, a sensitivity to the interpersonal relationship. Our paper is an attempt to answer this question. Dealt with in this paper are Newsgroup Discussions—a new form of human communication via personal computers.<sup>2</sup> In Newsgroup, anyone can, at will, suggest any subject, which will then be discussed by other participants all over the world who have an interest in it. Unlike E-Mail, which is a correspondence between acquaintances, or one-sided information-providing, Newsgroup discussion takes the form of opinion exchanges. In most cases, a speaker (S) reacts to someone else’s remark rather than to the subject itself. What characterizes this kind of talk exchange is, from a linguistic point of view, that S is addressing his/her remarks without any knowledge as to the interlocutor’s social background (such as age, occupation, social status or ethnic identity). Indeed, the employment of Newsgroup discussions as our research material grows out of this very artificiality.

Part One of this paper surveys speech styles labelled as feminine, with a special emphasis on linguistic politeness. Based on the observation made in Part One, Part Two analyses, in some detail, five threads of Newsgroup discussion,<sup>3</sup> which were carried on by the equal numbers of men and women, in terms of the frequency in the use of polite usage and also the strategies for its linguistic realization. Not being sex-exclusive but sex-preferential features based on a comparison with the other sex, our data will have to be analysed from the viewpoint of the speaker’s sex as well. In conclusion, we will try to consider what the results mean.

## I. Women and Politeness

Robin Lakoff argues in her *Language and Woman’s Place* that women’s speech differs from men’s in several significant ways. She proposes nine different features which she claims are characteristic of “women’s language”: (1) a special lexicon related to women’s specific interests; (2) empty adjectives (like *divine*, *charming*, *cute*); (3) question intonation in declarative contexts; (4) tag questions; (5) hedges

(such as *sort of* and *I guess*); (6) hypercorrect grammar; (7) super-polite forms; (8) lack of a sense of humour, and (9) speaking in italics.<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted at this point that strategic choices are the linguistic realization of certain social motivations. To put it the other way round, all members of a speech community have their own goals or desires they want to satisfy by means of communication, and it is from those wants that a number of linguistic strategies may be derived. No wonder, therefore, that the features listed above are closely related to each other at a deeper level; especially as far as traits (3), (4), (5), (7) and (9) are concerned, it is *politeness* that is a major motive for their strategic use. We would like to focus our attention on linguistic politeness in this paper.

What is politeness? How is it realized linguistically in English? H. P. Grice's four categories of Maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner) under the Cooperative Principle (CP)<sup>5</sup> may serve as guidelines for achieving maximally efficient communication. In actual conversations, however, there are many cases where S makes the communication efficient, and thus successful, by intentionally violating one or more of these maxims. In his *Principles of Pragmatics* Geoffrey N. Leech proposes the *Politeness Principle* (PP) to help account for the justification of this maxim infringement: "... the PP can be seen not just as another principle to be added to the CP, but as a necessary complement, which rescues the CP from serious trouble."<sup>6</sup>

Let us illustrate by quoting from Leech's book one dialogue in which the PP rescues the CP:

A: We'll miss Bill and Agatha, won't we?

B: Well, we'll miss Bill.<sup>7</sup>

It is obvious that here B fails to observe the Maxim and Quantity, for, when asked to confirm A's opinion, B agrees to only part of it and ignores the rest. Leech's explanation for the acceptability of B's utterance is this: "B could have been more informative, but only at the cost of being more impolite to a third party: ... B therefore suppressed the desired information in order to uphold the PP."<sup>8</sup> In this way, politeness can be a major motive for *not* talking Maxim-wise.

Central to the notion of politeness is, in Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson's terminology, the notion of *face*. According to them, every member of a society has two face-wants: the want to be unimpeded by others (negative face) and the want to be approved of (positive face).<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, it is true that certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face. The question then arises: when caught between the desire to satisfy others' face-wants and the desire to say things that infringe on those wants, what will we do? The answer is apparent. Unless the want to do a face-threatening act (FTA) with maximum efficiency is much greater than the want to preserve H's face to any degree, any competent agent will employ certain linguistic strategies to minimize the threat.

The linguistic realization of politeness strategies takes one of two forms, depending upon which aspect of face, positive or negative, is being stressed.<sup>10</sup> *Positive politeness* is oriented toward H's positive face, his/her desire to be understood, approved of, or admired. *Negative politeness*, on the other hand, is oriented mainly toward satisfying H's negative face, his/her basic claim of territory and self-determination. No matter which form a speaker adopts, however, underlying the strategies of polite obliquity is his/her sensitivity to H's face-wants. This is the very thing which characterizes women's speech styles.

Generally speaking, many social factors connected with the situation in which language is being used have an effect on the choice of some strategies rather than others. As far as politeness is concerned, the kinds and degrees of politeness can be determined, other things being equal, by two social dimensions: the *power* or *authority* of one participant over another, and the *social distance* between them.<sup>11</sup> The participants in our data, however, have no knowledge about their interlocutors in terms of either of these factors, being complete strangers to each other throughout the interaction. Not given any form of social relationships with H on the basis of which S can choose appropriate face-preserving polite usage in naturally-occurring face-to-face conversations, will women still use linguistic politeness more frequently than men? And what about the strategies employed for its

realization?

Before moving on to any detailed analyses, it is helpful to look more closely at the object of our study. Picked out of innumerable threads of discussions have been those about these various topics, from recreational to social: (a) Newsgroups: rec.<sup>12</sup> arts. disney. animation (119 utterances by men and 106 utterances by women); (b) Newsgroups: rec. arts. mystery (106 utterances by men and 120 utterances by women); (c) Newsgroups: rec. arts. poems and Newsgroups: rec. arts. prose (117 utterances by men and 104 utterances by women); (d) Newsgroups: alt.<sup>13</sup> women. attitudes (125 utterances by men and 126 utterances by women), and (e) Newsgroups: alt. psychology. personality (127 utterances by men and 142 utterances by women). For our purpose of contrasting the use-frequency of polite usage between men and women, the numbers of speakers of each sex are equal (twenty each). As a whole, our data consist of 594 utterances produced by a hundred men and 598 utterances by the same number of women. The term *utterance* is used in our paper in the sense of an independent expression ending with a period, an exclamation mark, or a question mark. It is, therefore, not necessarily a sentence; phrases or even single words—*Interesting*, for instance, are also included.

Readers may very well notice here that there is hardly any difference in the numbers of utterances between the sexes. This deserves more than a passing notice in that it suggests the necessity for further investigation of “verbosity,” which has been believed to be characteristic of women’s speech, from a gender-free perspective. One more interesting fact we have come across in the process of collecting research material is that, usually, the participants in Newsgroup discussions are, almost exclusively, male. (The six Newsgroups above are, therefore, unique cases where women positively participate in the opinion exchanges, expressing themselves among men.) This tendency becomes more conspicuous in contexts where discussions centre on serious and debatable topics, such as politics, current affairs, ideas, or people’s ways of living. This may well serve as evidence for the widespread belief that men like to talk about serious matters, such as

are seldom brought into conversation by women, who prefer talking about domestic affairs.<sup>14</sup> To argue this point would, however, lead us too far away from the purpose of the present paper. Let us now leave the general description of our data and turn to their concrete examination.

## II. Are Women More Polite Than Men?

### II-1. Politeness toward FTAs

We will begin with the ways in which FTAs—the acts that may be most closely associated with the notion of politeness—are handled. FTAs can be classified by whether it is primarily positive face or negative face that is at stake.<sup>15</sup> Acts that mainly threaten H's positive face would include those that show that S has a negative evaluation of some aspect of H's positive face (for example, expressions of disapproval, criticism, insult, accusation, disagreement, or challenge). Acts that threaten H's negative face would include those that predicate some future act (A) of H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act (A) (for instance, orders, requests, suggestions, advice, or reminders). When doing an FTA, we are left with the choice between doing it in the most direct and unambiguous way possible (for example, for disagreement, saying "I disagree.") or doing it in such a way as to save face for the addressee (for instance, responding with "I understand your point, but I think. . . ." rather than "I don't agree.") The point is, to borrow Brown and Levinson's terminology, whether S communicates the content of the FTA with or without *redress*.<sup>16</sup>

Let us now present several examples of each case. (The speaker's sex and the kind of face being threatened will be provided in parentheses after each utterance, with men speakers being signified by M, women speakers by W, positive face by P, and negative face by N.)

#### *Without redress*

- (1) I *strongly disagree*. (W)
- (2) You *really shouldn't*. . . . (W)

- (3) You're *quite wrong* on this. (M)

*With redress*

(Positive politeness)

- (4) *Excellent point!!! I must however*, point out that.... (W, P)  
(5) *Although I appreciate* your line of reasoning, *I have to say* that NOT all.... I think that your ideas are *well worth consideration* however. (W, P)  
(6) *While I agree* that..., I find.... (M, P)  
(7) This has been *interesting with many notable suggestions*, however.... (M, P)  
(8) *Nice try*, John, *but...* *Nice try though*. (M, P)  
(9) ...and *let's please not* go overboard on this thread. (M, P)

(Negative politeness)

- (10) I've been thinking about this for several days, and *I have to* admit that you'd have to look.... (W, P)  
(11) *I just had to* comment on this...*maybe I'm wrong, but* I don't think.... (W, P)  
(12) It's *a little* strange that such a simple rule of...would be so overanalyzed. (M, P)  
(13) If you feel...then *maybe* you should be straight with.... (W, N)  
(14) Sooo—I *thought it would be interesting to* hear your thoughts on.... (W, N)  
(15) *If you can help*, we would be most grateful. (W, N)  
(16) *I encourage you to* seek.... (W, N)  
(17) *Wouldn't it be better to* find something that....? (M, N)  
(18) If you want..., well...is *probably* a decent place to start. (M, N)  
(19) *Could you recommend...*? (M, N) (Italics mine)

We have found little, if any, difference in the ratio of redressive usage to bald usage between sexes. Among the men's 23 utterances which convey impolite beliefs for the H, those that are redressed for

the sake of politeness amount to 20 (87%); likewise, politeness is preferred at the expense of efficiency in 22 utterances out of 26 face-threatening linguistic behaviour by women (84.6%)—almost the same rate. Can this phenomenon—that is, the small difference in language usage between sexes—also be observed in the strategies for the realization of politeness at a deeper level?

As has been mentioned earlier, linguistic politeness takes one of two forms—positive politeness or negative politeness. In the case of positive politeness, redress consists in the assurance that one's own wants are, in some respects, similar to those of the addressee. More concretely, the face threat of an act is minimized by, for example, claiming "common ground" between S and H—that is, in-group membership, or a common point of view or common opinions, attitudes, or knowledge. This kind of politeness can be observed typically in the way disagreement is avoided. When full agreement is found to be impossible, the desire to satisfy H's wants to be understood or corroborated will typically lead a rational speaker to token agreement; he/she will redress his/her utterances so as to appear to agree or to hide his/her disagreement, thus keeping the addressee, to one degree or another, in countenance. Examples of this strategy are (4)–(8) on page 69. Another technique for reducing the distance between S's and H's points of view is the use of the inclusive "we" when really it is only H who is being referred to, as seen in "...and *let's please not...*" in (9).

While positive politeness is based on familiarity, negative politeness is motivated by social distancing. Realizations of negative-politeness strategies are based on the assurance that S respects H's rights to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. FTAs are thus softened with various kinds and levels of negative-politeness strategies.

Let us start with hedges. When asking someone to do something, we cannot automatically assume that the addressee can and is willing to do it; likewise, promising to do something, even if it is ostensibly beneficial to the addressee, may be judged to be an imposition. One

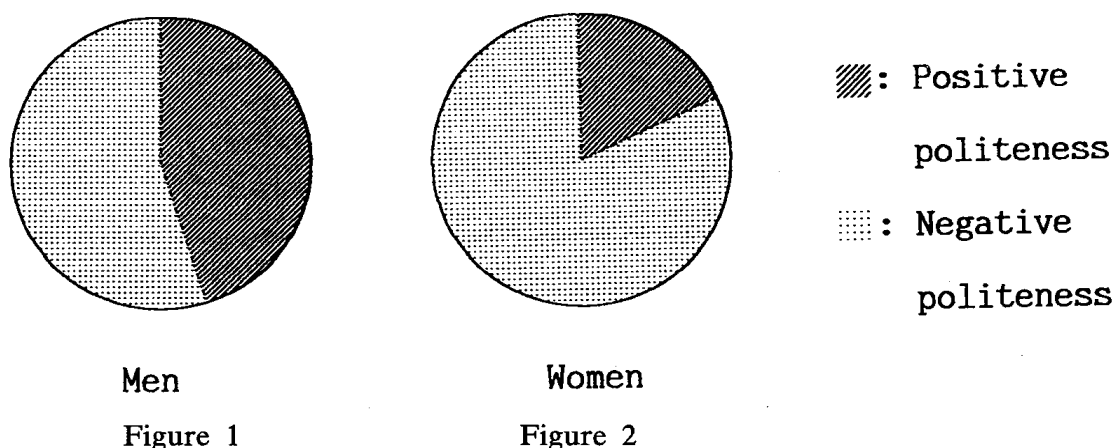


way of mitigating any threat to H's negative face is, therefore, to avoid making presumptions, or to make only minimal presumptions, about H or his/her wants; this can be linguistically realized by hedges. Turning to Newsgroup discussions, we encounter many cases where hedges rescue S from being impolite. Some of them have been touched upon before, with hedges being printed in italics. "*a little*" in (12), for example, redresses the criticism that follows. Similarly, "*maybe*" in (13), "*I encourage you to...*" in (16), and "*probably*" in (18) soften the illocutionary force of advice, while S's regret or reluctance to do the FTA is communicated by the preface "*I have to*" in (10) and (11).

When the proposed FTA involves predicting an act of H—for example, requesting his/her aid, one way of making negative-face redress is to avoid the coercion of H. This may be done by giving him/her the option not to do the act (A). In a context where the propositional content attributes some effort or trouble to H, it is indirectness that diminishes the illocutionary force and, consequently, makes the illocution linguistically polite, for it conveys S's doubt or negative bias as to whether or not H will perform the intended action, thus making it easier for H to say no. The Newsgroup discussions provide some examples of this. "*I thought it would be interesting to hear your thoughts on...*" in (14), "*If you can help...*" in (15), and "*Could you recommend...?*" in (19) are cases in point.

Another way to partially satisfy H's negative-face demands is to dissociate either S or H, or both, from the FTA. By avoiding reference to the persons involved in FTAs, S can convey that it is not his/her wish, but someone else's, to do the FTA, or that the addressee to whom the FTA must be made is other than H, or is only inclusive of H. This technique can be seen, in our data, in "*It's a little strange that such a simple rule of... would be so overanalyzed.*" in (12) and "*Wouldn't it be better to find...?*" in (17).

Now that we are sure of the two types of linguistic realization of politeness, our next concern is to compare and contrast those strategies between the sexes in terms of their distribution ratios.<sup>17</sup> What is immediately apparent from Figures 1 and 2 is that, in men's speech,



there is not very much, if any, difference between the ways in which FTAs are redressed, while, on the other hand, women make the utterances polite, to some extent at least, by the use of negative strategies in over eighty percent of the cases. We will consider this phenomenon further below.

## II-2. Politeness for acts excluding FTAs

Politeness strategies, both positive and negative, are not only for FTA-redress. Positive-politeness strategies are also useful whenever a speaker wants to indicate his/her wish to come closer to the addressee; likewise, negative-politeness techniques serve in general as social distancing.

With respect to the approach-based strategies, three forms of linguistic realization are worthy of note in relation to what is believed to be “women’s style.” First, interrogatives (including tag questions) accompany many supportive and co-operative communications, offering an addressee an easy way into a conversation, as in:

(20) I enjoyed...very much. What did you think? (W)

Secondly, speakers try to minimize the distance from H by claiming familiarity or common ground by the use of the inclusive “we,” and also by expressing—very often exaggerating—their approval of, or interest in, some aspects of the addressee. The following are a few typical examples observed in our data:

(21) Let’s talk about... (W)

(22) Let’s start..., OK? (M)

- (23) Great choice! (W)
- (24) Very good point! (W)
- (25) I agree so much! (W)
- (26) I read your article with interest. (M)
- (27) I like it! (M)
- (28) You're exactly right. (M)

According to Brown and Levinson, emphatic words serve politeness functions as well on the grounds that "there seems to be an element of attempting to increase the interest of the conversational contributions by expressing them dramatically."<sup>18</sup> To be more precise, statements expressed dramatically with various kinds and levels of emphatic adverbs capture H's interest to the subject, consequently pulling him/her right into the conversation. Newsgroup discussions provide many examples of this device:

- (29) She enjoyed it *very much*. She *did* cover her eyes....She *definitely* was glad.... (W)
- (30) *Pretty* amazing since...! Can *highly* recommend them. (W)
- (31) ...and while it is *certainly* qualified as..., it *does* get.... (W)
- (32) Also, the solution was *completely* unbelievable and came *completely* out of the blue. (W)
- (33) It's *just a damn* good book and *truly* off beat. (M)
- (34) Besides, there was...for making him *so sickeningly* charming. (M)
- (35) But...*really did* have a problem with it. (M)
- (36) ...was *hideously* ugly.... (M) (Italics mine)

Having observed the devices generally exploited for reducing a social distance between S and H (needless to say, they are not the only linguistic realizations of approach-based politeness), we can now go on to contrast their use-frequency between the sexes. (Due to the small difference in the total numbers of utterances between men and women, we will make the examination by dealing with the numbers as they are, without turning them into percentages.) Table 1 below illustrates the numbers of positively-polite usages, classified in terms of the strategies

Table 1

	Interrogatives	Inclusive “we”	Expressing approval/interest	Emphatic adverbs	Total
Men	67	9	14	269	359
Women	51	2	9	299	361

discussed above.

Recall that these linguistic features are not only realizations of politeness but also presumed characteristics of women’s speech. It is a firmly-believed argument that women’s culture is reflected in their language usage in various forms, one of them being, compared with men, the more frequent use of co-operative and polite styles motivated by a sensitivity to others’ feelings. Yet our analyses so far have gone against this belief in terms of at least three features among the four—interrogatives, the inclusive “we,” and the expression of approval or interest.

The only exception is the employment of emphatic adverbs. Seen from the viewpoint of the relationship between S and H, this strategy is clearly marked off from the other three. On the one hand, interrogatives, the inclusive “we,” and the expression of approval/interest are all based, by claiming familiarity or common ground, on a direct interpersonal relationship between them. On the other hand, emphatic words function to make a *story* impressive; thus, speakers try to draw H into the conversation not by appealing to him/her directly, but by attracting his/her interest to the subject in an indirect manner, making the story a stepping stone. How can we interpret the fact that, among the linguistic features labelled as feminine because of their politeness functions, it is only the emphatic words that women actually use more frequently than men? Before speculating about this question, let us examine our final device, social distancing.

Another way of realizing politeness originates in the belief that it is impolite to assert, or advance, familiarity. Where the addressee is, in S’s assessment, in a more respectable position, S’s deference to H is

linguistically realized by means of social distancing, which consists of two strategies (or, rather, two aspects of one strategy)—raising the addressee, while simultaneously humbling the speaker him/herself. Our data provide four expressions by men and seven by women of this “deferential” self-humbling, such as “my *faulty* recommendation (M),” “*If I remember correctly* (W),” and “I hope I have been *some kind of* help (W).” This technique may be along the same lines, in S’s treatment of the addressee, as the indirect one represented by the employment of emphatic adverbs. Viewed in this light, the fact that, in both cases, it is women rather than men who more often exploit those indirect or distancing strategies by preference cannot be ignored as just a coincidence.

To recapitulate, this section has contrasted men and women in terms of their use of linguistic politeness, thus revealing two interesting and suggestive facts. For one thing, contrary to our expectations, little, if any, difference was observed between the sexes in the proportion of the employment of politeness strategies, no matter what belief, impolite or harmless, the utterance originally conveyed. Nevertheless, when examined more closely from the standpoint of the way those strategies were utilized, women were found to be significantly different from men. Where speakers were women, the face-threatening aspects of an act were mitigated in over eighty percent of the cases by means of distance-based negative strategies; on the other hand, in men’s speech, such strategies were used almost equally with the other strategies, those of positive politeness.

Politeness is, however, by no means limited to FTAs; it is also freely exploited in language usage irrespective of the presence or absence of face-damaging aspects. Sex differences appear in a more complicated way in politeness strategies toward harmless remarks. In view of S’s own assessment of the relationship with H, however, one general point becomes very clear: approach-based strategies are more often employed by men than by women, while it is their more frequent use of distancing techniques that mark women off from men in their linguistic realization of politeness. Thus, from these observations, we

notice one common linguistic correlation, beyond the confines of the purport of an utterance, between politeness and gender: that is, men speakers' direct approach to H and its avoidance by women speakers.

## Conclusion

Do people try to be polite to an addressee in their linguistic behaviour even if the addressee is a total stranger on a computer network? If so, in what way? Is there any difference in linguistic realization dependent upon the sex of the speaker? In the hope of answering these questions we have contrasted men and women with respect to the language usages of polite obliquity, using Newsgroup discussions as our research material. Only a rough look at them has made it clear that participants, both men and women, *do* exploit politeness strategies in various ways. As for sex differences, our analysis has seen them in the way two devices—positive and negative—are exploited. On the one hand, men employ those two devices nearly equally toward FTAs; on the other hand, when speakers are women, politeness realization is oriented to one particular technique, viz, negative politeness.

We have next examined how speakers try to be linguistically polite in making harmless remarks; we have thus discovered more complicated sex differences. In brief, in order to be positively polite claiming in-group membership or common ground, men more often appeal to the addressee directly than do women; on the other hand, the only strategy favoured by women rather than by men is to approach the addressee indirectly, making what is being told a stepping stone. Seen from the point of view of the relationship between S and H, along the same lines as this last strategy is negative politeness, which is based on social distancing. Here again, there is a difference: females use the self-lowering device for the sake of deference more frequently than do men.

What do these linguistic findings mean? As a virtual precondition of human co-operation, politeness is indispensable in communication with others. Any competent members of a society, both men and

women, therefore, are familiar with various kinds and levels of linguistic politeness in their social lives. Nevertheless, the politeness shown in our Newsgroup discussions is not divergent in motives for its use. Every speech behaviour has its own communicative, or social, ends, and linguistic strategies are means to satisfy those ends. What speakers in this artificial verbal interchanges wanted to achieve in the end, by utilizing politeness strategies (irrespective of their kinds), may have been to make their expressions of opinions, ideas, or experiences effective enough to appeal to the addressee rather than to express high regard for him/her. In this sense, politeness on the computer network is not addressee-oriented but speaker-oriented. Is this because respect for others is becoming less and less valued in society, or is it because the situation in which this kind of politeness phenomenon is observed is a new type of communication performed between complete strangers without reserve, or is it both? We will leave the resolution of this question for future research. At all events, those findings suggest that the term *polite* used throughout the present paper should be interpreted in a broader sense than the most general one we are familiar with—"socially correct and considerate of other people's feelings" (cited from *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*).

All things considered, *politeness* is a phenomenon observable beyond the confines of situation or gender (and presumably, of culture too). Our research has substantiated this argument. Yet, as has been demonstrated, there exist differentiations based on the speaker's sex in the way of encoding in language the desire to be polite. The two politeness strategies are quite contrastive in that positive politeness conveys familiarity, the speaker's assertion of mutual friendship or solidarity, whereas by employing negative strategies a speaker can gain benefits by maintaining a social distance from the addressee. Although we cannot jump to a decisive conclusion on the basis of our limited materials, we would like, here, to close by presenting the following hypothesis: these sex-linked traits in linguistic politeness are nothing but a reflection in one's speech behaviour, even with strangers on a computer network—a new type of human communication, of the

social structure of male dominance and female subservience.

## NOTES

1. In their "Women's Language or Powerless Language?" (in *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, eds., Sally McConnell-Ginet, Ruth Borker and Nelly Furman (New York: Praeger, 1980), 93–110), William M. O'Barr and Bowman K. Atkins rename the linguistic features associated with women's speech *Powerless Language*, arguing that it is because of the tendency of women to occupy relatively powerless positions in society that it has been inaccurately related with the speakers' sex.
2. "Newsgroups" are a part of "Usenet," a discussion system distributed worldwide.
3. The data for this paper were obtained from Newsgroup discussions held in July, 1996.
4. Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975) 53–57.
5. In his "Logic and Conversation" (*Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 3 of *Speech Acts*, eds. P. Cole and J. L. Morgan (New York: Academic Press, 1975)), H. P. Grice proposes the Cooperative Principle, which consists of four categories of maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner.
6. Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (London: Longman, 1983) 80.
7. Leech 80.
8. Leech 81.
9. Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 61.
10. For the kinds of linguistic politeness, see Brown and Levinson.
11. Leech 126.
12. Groups on recreational topics.
13. Groups on various topics, serious or not.
14. Cited in Jennifer Coates, *Women, Men and Language: A Sociolinguistic Account of Sex Differences in Language* (London: Longman, 1986) 151–2.
15. Brown and Levinson provide two ways of classifying FTAs: the first classification is by whether it is mainly positive face or negative face that is at stake, while the second is by whether it is S's face or H's face that is primarily threatened. This paper is concerned with the first distinction.
16. Brown and Levinson 69.
17. The absolute numbers are as follows:

	Men	Women
Positive politeness	9	4
Negative politeness	11	18

18. Brown and Levinson 107.



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